

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Claims 1-5 (canceled)

Claim 6 (previously presented): A screw element as set forth in claim 12, wherein the spring element has a relatively flat spring characteristic.

Claim 7 (previously presented): A screw element as set forth in claim 6, wherein the spring element is of lower hardness than the screw element.

Claim 8 (previously presented): A screw element as set forth in claim 12, wherein the spring element has projections in the region of the workpiece contact.

Claim 9 (previously presented): A screw having a head in the form of the screw element as set forth in claim 12, wherein the screw is of a thread-forming nature.

Claim 10 (previously presented): A screw connection between two workpieces of which at least one is a metal plate or a plastic element, with a screw element as set forth in claim 12, wherein only the spring element and it bears with a predetermined prestressing force against the adjoining workpiece.

Claim 11 (canceled)

Claim 12 (currently amended): A screw element having a screw axis, comprising:
a tool engagement element; and
a spring element having a free edge;
wherein the spring element is formed on the screw element in one piece;
wherein the spring element is coaxial with the screw axis;

wherein the free edge defines a workpiece contact plane which is perpendicular to the screw axis and is spaced axially from the screw element;

wherein the spring element is mounted at the periphery of the screw element;

wherein the spring element projects radially beyond the periphery;

wherein the spring element forms a workpiece contact which is disposed outside the periphery of the screw element and is concentric with the screw axis;

wherein the spring element is a ring which is concentric around the screw axis;

wherein the spring element has a workpiece contact which is annular throughout;

wherein the ring has a plurality of openings distributed uniformly over its periphery; and

wherein the spring element is adapted to prevent the pre-stressing effect for the screw connection being lost by virtue of changes in length thus ensuring sufficient frictional force to prevent the screw connection becoming unscrewed, and

wherein the spring element is of lower hardness than the screw element, and

wherein the spring element has projections in the region of the workpiece contact.

Claim 13 (Original): A screw having a head in the form of the screw element as set forth in claim 9, wherein the screw is of a self-boring nature.

Claim 14 (New): A screw element having a screw axis, comprising:

a tool engagement element;

a spring element having a free edge;

said spring element being extending from the screw element to form one piece;

and is coaxial with the screw axis and mounted on the periphery of the screw element and projects radially from said periphery;

said free edge defining a workpiece contact plane which is substantially perpendicular to the screw axis and is spaced axially from the screw element;

wherein the spring element contacts a workpiece in a region outside the periphery of the screw element and is generally concentric with the screw axis;

wherein the spring element is a ring which is generally concentric around the screw axis;

wherein the ring has a plurality of openings distributed uniformly over its periphery;

wherein the spring element is adapted to prevent the pre-stressing effect for the screw connection being lost by virtue of changes in length thus ensuring sufficient frictional force to prevent the screw connection becoming unscrewed, and

wherein the spring element is of lower hardness than the screw element, and

wherein the spring element has projections in the region of the workpiece contact.

BEST AVAILABLE COPY